764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the [462] mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the

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Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

764 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numer-
● 761 ous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

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young man! [Ed., the text is not translated from mid-page 17 to the second paragraph, page 19.]

[19] Since the chief goal of our expedition was to study the practices and customs connected with the material and everyday life of the native, as well as to gather objects for our collection, our stay among the various tribes was too

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Fig. 14. Natural Deformations among the Natives. (1) Bankutu woman; (2) Barakata woman; (3) Bankutu child.

short to permit a thorough study of their religious life and its attendant customs.

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We ascertained that the native, as a rule, acknowledges the existence of a higher spirit. During my stay in the village of Kapanda, Banfumungu tribe, I had the opportunity to question a chief on the subject.

"Who causes the sun and the moon to rise? Who gave you the fish of the river and the animals of the plain, Matali?"

The chief looked at me for an instant, dumbfounded, and then replied, "Nzambi ve Mundele?" "Was it not Nzambi, White man?"

"Why, then, do you not call upon Nzambi to protect your crops, favor your fishing, and grant you success in hunting, Matali?" [20]

517 626 of seniority (she is then called bosólɔ́ -- see Chapter III, Article III). The giving of a widow who is in the position described is preferably avoided.

837 626 Illicit relations between a son and his father's wife are judged with especially great severity if the young man's own mother is still alive. He is reproached for his behavior in terms which are clear and crude: Oóy'ósanganya mbindo ɨkɛ́ la mbindo y'ɨ́s'á nyangɔ́, "you unite your stains (impurities) with those of your father and [302] mother"; Ouɛ́ fik'eki wɛ́ wímánfikí, "you are returning from whence you came." To these expressions is often added ówa ɨ́ɔ́ɛ́ɛ́ɛ́ oleki líloka, "you will die because of your too great wickedness." To the ●[761] Nkundɔ́ this last statement is a kind of curse, and if it is repeated by several persons it will not fail to have its effect. Or, to speak as our people do, if everyone greatly wails over and against this man, he will really die. (1)

1. This attitude of the Nkundɔ́ may be one of the reasons why widows are assigned not to the son of the deceased, but to his brother.

If the son in question is not married, especially if he has already reached a relatively advanced age, and if he approaches the wives of his polygamous father, the matter is considered less serious. The latter cannot be too angry, especially when only isolated instances are involved; for other relatives will allow their affection for this young man to speak, since they are aware of his passion and therefore understand his temptations and follies. They would intervene to pacify the father and urge him to prevent the repetition of such occurrences by obtaining a wife for his son. In exceptional cases the family council may even judge the father to be in the wrong because of his harshness toward his son and may allow the latter to take his father's wife away from him (never, however, the first wife, the favorite, or the boɨ́mbu); such was the case we described in

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Nkundu

Chapter IX

Death

Since the subject of our study is only Nkundó marriage, we will examine matters relating to death only from this limited standpoint. As to the general aspects of the question, the reader will find them in our article on the funeral customs of the Nkundó, about to be published in Anthropos.

Article I. Sorrow and Mourning

In the study cited above, a word was said concerning the varying degrees of intensity that may be reached in the sorrow caused by the death of a cherished being.

Of course the suffering does not always exclude a mixture of egoistic elements, such as regret of the financial loss involved in the death of a wife and the obligation of continence and various other prohibitions of widowhood. This is rather natural and does not merit discussion. On the other hand, it would be unjust and contrary to the truth to attribute all the sadness to those base feelings. In general, this sorrow must also be taken as evidence of a true love which is often its primary cause. Exceptions do occur, however, for instance in the case of an old woman who has been inherited by a polygamist.

When we compare the various manifestations of sorrow at the death of a spouse with those observed at the death of a relative, we note certain practices specific to the former case. One might say that at the death of a spouse, the signs of sorrow reach a culminating point [418], as if native law wished to underline the predominance of the relationship created by marriage over the bonds of kinship and thus manifest its agreement with divine law.

Nevertheless it is clear that practice does not always correspond to theory, here any more than elsewhere. We should not be astonished in not finding among the natives a perfect and ideal love

152 761 593 free of all egoism. When even among peoples universally recognized as superior, self-pity during the pain felt on the death of someone beloved is neither rare nor reprehensible, can we be shocked that our natives experience similar regrets? Do we condemn a young widow who, although sincerely and intensely regretting the husband she loved tenderly and whom death has just removed from her affection, thinks at the same time of the unhappy situation in which she and her small children find themselves as a result? And is not the reasonable hope of finding someone who will take care of her and the orphans an effective and legitimate consolation that will help her to endure the trial?

All things considered, it is therefore not at all surprising that our Blacks react that way. And it is quite natural that, in practice, they should suffer more from the death of a father and especially a mother or a child than from the loss of a husband or wife. The situation here is entirely different from that in Europe. And the system of polygamy, with all its consequences, is not exactly discouraging to egoism and favorable to an ascension toward the ideal of a more sublime love.

Therefore we should not be surprised that a wife at the death of her husband laments: ngóy'ámbóndí óye! ("Mother, my husband, ah!"); but at the death of a child or a mother or father she wails: ngóya nɔ́ɔ́lélengana óye! ("Mother, I am bereft, ah!"), thus expressing a more intense sorrow. For a father or a mother cannot be replaced, but she will always find someone who will want to marry her. As to a child, between it and its parents there is more of a life in common [419] than between spouses under the system of polygamy. More marks of tenderness are also exchanged between mother and child than between native couples.

764 152 593 Immediately after his wife's death, a husband is surrounded by all the women of the village who come and mistreat him. They vie with each other in smearing him with charcoal smut, soil, and mud, and in rubbing him with the plant called limámá, which causes a stinging rash comparable to that caused by nettles in Europe. There are no relatives among the women who engage in this